

the years react to this project. I know that there are some persons who are concerned about the environment and the impact this will have but I suggest that those same people were just as concerned a little while ago about the drought. So therefore, let's look at it in the total concept. Let's support the resolution and then allow it to stand on its own merits in future years. But certainly the State of Nebraska should not close its eyes to the possibility that we can contribute substantially to restoration to some of the diminished underground water within this state.

SPEAKER LUEDTKE: Senator Kremer, you may close by way of reply on the resolution.

SENATOR KREMER: Mr. Chairman. First of all, I'd like to respond to Senator Merz statement that he supposed that there was as much as 50% or as many as 50% of the people at the hearing that were opposed. I gave you accurate figures on those that spoke in support and those that signed the sheet. At the same time, I asked for a show of those that were present by standing to their feet, those that supported the project and those that would be opposed. Now this was an estimate on my part but I believe I could be backed up by members of the committee but I suppose at least 2/3 to 3/4 of them that were there stood in support of the project. Now I want to call your attention to the fact that the O'Neill Project is a part of the Pick-Sloane Plan that came under discussion and was passed later on by Congress that set up the development of the Missouri River Basin. In the Pick-Sloane Plan which is a plan that has to deal with the Missouri River and its tributaries, Nebraska came into the picture by having three projects proposed, one of them midstate, one of them the O'Neill project, and the other the North Loup Project. We did support the resolution that would ask Congress to continue a favorable look at the North Loup Project. Of course, the O'Neill Project was assigned to committee for review and for a hearing. Now, if Nebraska loses these projects, we have nothing else in the picture today that will give us any hope of using some of the water that is available to us in the Missouri River Basin and its tributaries. It's fundamentally necessary that we do so. I'll attempt to show you why. Not only will this project irrigate 77,000 acres of land by surface irrigation, but I'd like to call your attention to the sheet that I had laid on your desks that is initialed by myself and it does not refer or make reference to the O'Neill Project. I did call Conservation and Survey Division and asked them in their opinion, the application of surface water to that area would have the same end result as it relates to underground water as what happened in Tri-County. Now the document that you have laid on your desk is the Tri-County Project and I would ask you to look at it. You will note that in about the center of the sheet, you have a dark shaded area. That is the area that is being irrigated by Tri-County, in other words, the water that is stored in Lake McConaughy. Now you will notice the dotted area surrounding the heavily shaded area and you will note this is the effect that the application of surface water has to that small area, the effect that it has on the surrounding area. So we're dealing not only with the acreage that is under the project itself but a lot of surrounding area because of the recharge of underground water. Now what's happening in the O'Neill area? The water level there, like in several other areas of the state, has been dropping continually each year.